SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA - INTRODUCTION

CLASS – 1

Date: US: 25th Jan. 2024
Time: West Coast 6-30 pm.

Namaste to you all,

Today, by the Grace of the Divine and the benefaction of Mother Nature (*Prakṛti Mātā*), we are entering into the '*Universal Scripture*' which is closely associated with the life of us all, of every human, — the *Bhagavad Gita*. We use the term *Universal* because it is beyond the limits of time and place, and is beyond the boundaries of race, religion, country, gender, color, community, and age. Sri Krishna is presenting us 'Eternal Principles' that govern human life.

We are spiritual seekers aspiring to transcend all limitations imposed upon us by Nature and release ourselves from the grip of the past momentum gained through repeated actions, which are known as '*Vāsanās*'.

Thus, we shall be studying B.G. in the way that is promoting our evolution to our divine-hood. Yes, every human bears three natures — animal-hood, human-hood, and divine-hood. The path to perfection consists of destroying the animal-hood and becoming a perfect human; then, transcending the human-hood too, and become a perfect divine being. This process is called spiritual evolution. And through that the human finds his ultimate and absolute fulfillment — *Paripūrṇatā* — परिपूर्णता।

This is the intension behind the Lord giving this Supreme message to humanity making the war and Arjuna's despondency as an occasion (*Nimitta* निमित्त). We see Sw.Vivekananda presenting the essence of Gita in a simple way — wherein the Supreme Goal of human life and existence is presented in clear terms:

'*Each man is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, and philosophy — by one, or more, or all of these — and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or rituals, or books or temples, or farms, are but secondary details*.'

Sri Ramakrishna presents the essence of *Bhagavad Gita* through a different perspective wherein the *path* to reach the Supreme Goal of human life is highlighted:

"*what meaning does Gītā convey? What it becomes if you repeat 10 times. If you go on repeating Gītā, Gītā it reverses to Tāgī, Tāgī or Tyāgī, Tyāgī. This is the teaching of Gītā — O man, give up all other worldly pursuits and strive to attain God*."

These two statements contain the five important conclusive doctrines presented with certainty from the good old *Vedic* times of undated antiquity. The *Vedās* proclaim five convictions:

(i) The Source of this universe and of all living beings in it, is '*Brahman*', meaning: 'the Unchanging Infinite Eternal Being'. '*Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante | Ena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayantyabhisaṁviśanti | tad brahma* ||' 'यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तद् ब्रह्म ॥' From where all these lives (and this material world) appear, in which they are sustained and to which they return, That is *Brahman*.

(ii) Divinity of man: The One that is beyond this universe, the Ultimate Cause, *The Brahman*, — verily exists deep within man as *The Ātman*. And, is conveyed through the four *Mahāvākyās* (Great Verdicts):

1. *Tat Tvam Asi* ---------(तत् त्वम् असि) 'That thou art' (*Sāma veda Chāndogya Up.* 6.7.8)
2. *Aham Brahmāsmi* -- (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) --'I am *Brahman*' (*Yajur veda Bṛhd. Up.* 1.4.10)
3. *Prajñānam Brahma* (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म) -----'*Prajñāna* is *Brahman*' (*Ṛg veda Aitareya Up.* 3.3)
4. *Ayam Ātmā Brahma* (अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म) 'This Self is *Brahman*' (*Atharva veda Mandukya Up.*1.2)

These statements are the final verdict of the *Vedās* regarding the '*Self'* (the individual being, the *Jīvātman*) being divine, The Pure Divinity, *Shuddha Caitanya*. The Self is known to be remaining embodied within three external bodily sheaths (gross, subtle and causal) which is practically evident by the three states each Soul passes through daily — waking, dreaming, and deep-sleep. These statements support the true spiritual insight (revelation/realization अनुभूति) that the individualized *Self* (*Jīva*) would have with Enlightenment. With enlightenment dawns the Knowledge that the '*Individual Self*' (*Jīvātman*) which appears as a separate entity, is in essence and reality (*Ātman*), and is an inseparable part and manifestation of the Whole (*Brahman*).

These four statements provide us with clear understanding that we are *Immortal Beings* belonging to the Realm of the Spirit, enveloped in a mortal body, and lying in an ever-changing realm of matter — the *Prakṛti*, Nature.

(iii) World as the manifestation of the Absolute Existence: As is *That* Unlimited world of Spirit, so is here *This* apparently limited world of matter which is self-contained manifestation of *That Spiritual Existence* — The Brahman.

Pūrṇam adaḥ Pūrṇam idam Pūrṇāt Pūrṇam udacyate | (पूर्णम् अदः पूर्णम् इदं पूर्णात् पूर्णम् उदच्यते).

That (the Absolute Existence) is Whole and Complete in Itself (being Caitanya, the Spirit); This (the Universe) too is Whole and Complete in Itself (being the Manifestation of Caitanya, the Spirit); from *That Absolute* manifests *This Universe*.

Along with the universe life too comes into existence. Life is an expression of Spirit through matter. Living beings are combination of Spirit and matter. Thus, we have Spiritual existence and bodily existence. The spiritual existence is *Ānanda Svarūpa* — is Bliss by itself. Unchanging and Eternal. Bodily existence is subjected to constant change and is pain inflicting and is the cause of bondage. Thus, the soul (i.e., the individualized Spirit projecting through body) seeks freedom from bodily existence. The struggle of the Soul for Freedom effectuates evolution to divine-hood.

(iv) The only purpose of human life is to attain *total Freedom* from Nature and attain *Absolute Fulfilment* in life. The purpose for which Nature has provided human body to man is to realize one's own '*Self'* independent of body. That makes him get back his lost identity of being eternally one and inseparable from God, The Absolute Existence, The *Brahman*. And by that alone man realizes the truth of himself being Immortal.

"*Tameva vidhitva ati-mṛtumeti Nānyaḥ panthā vedyate ayanāya* ||" (*Śvetāśvataropa Up.* 3.8)
"By knowing Him alone one crosses over death. There is no other way to attain Immortality."

(v) Through renunciation alone one attains Immortality.

Scriptures proclaim ' त्यागेनैके अमृततत्वं आनशुः' '*Tyāgenaike Amṛtatvaṁ Ānaśuḥ*' "A few could attain mmortality, and it was through renunciation".

Renunciation is releasing yourself from those bondages which bind you to the world. Objects and people do not bind; attachments to the objects and people bind. Keep the objects and people with you, renounce the attachments. Actions do not bind; the ego that '*I do, I enjoy*' binds. Perform all the actions but renounce the ego. Unselfish love does not bind, selfish love binds; love your family, friends, relatives, and others around intimately without selfishness, expectations, and attachments. Let that love be the sacrifice without making it a means of enjoyment — that is renunciation.

Through renunciation you will win over your inner enemies — lust, anger, greed, delusion, ego/audacity, jealousy/hatred, attachments, and aversions (*Kāma*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Mada*, *Mātsarya*, *Rāga-Dwesha*). Through renunciation you will acquire divine love. Like a child growing beyond toys-play on becoming a youth, you too have grown from human to divine beyond worldly needs. Your play shall now be with the devotees in singing the names and glories of God, in spiritual practices to attain God and in serving the needy.

Emerge out of your old-world personality — that is renunciation.

CLASS – 2

Date: US: 01st Feb. 2024
Time: West Coast 6-30 pm.

I, rather, hesitate to tell that the spiritual truths or their analysis or the path to its realization is scientific because science limits itself to what is within the range of five senses and conceivable by mind and discernable through intellect; whereas, there exists unimaginably innumerable universes with various dimensions and planes of existences beyond the range of human perception and beyond human conception. Some amount of it gets revealed when man transcends his mind. This, so called 'scientific intellect' even of the most intelligent human, has got forged to work in a particular fashion because of its involvement in the repeated process of '*scientific analysis*' everywhere by which it gets habituated to adhere to *reasoning and logic*. This tendency of intellect continues by the formation of permanent groves in the brain to function in that way. But for this self-imposed limitation, the intellect would have acquired a higher power of — the intuition — which can penetrate into Nature and know the secrets beyond human range of perception and know the Eternal Principles that govern life in general and human life in particular. Intuitive power manifests in an intellect only when it is pure. Intellect is said to be pure when it stands independent of the mind, the mind that is bound to its own earlier experiences, its memories, and the tendencies (*Vāsanās*) it has acquired lives after lives. Owing to its own nature, the intellect possesses, yet another associate — the ego, from which it has to be independent to be called 'pure intellect'. Ego bears individualized identity and self-awareness — 'I am'. Further, this 'I am' (the ego) functions in three different roles as 'doer', 'enjoyer', and 'knower' — the doer-ship (*Kartṛtva* कतृत्व), the enjoyer-ship (*Bhoktṛtva* भोग्तृत्व) and, the knower-ship (*Jñātṛtva* ज्ञातृत्व).

When the intellect becomes free from the drag of mind and from the drive of the ego, it naturally finds oneness with Mother Nature and all beings. It is then able to grasp the divine and is said to be the '*Enlightened Intellect*'.

This higher intellect '*the Enlightened Intellect*' which can grasp, search, and reach — the Infinite unchanging Eternal Reality — that stands behind this ever-changing universe in which we live, and behind such other countless universes. That Eternal Reality is the Ultimate Reality, the Ocean of Bliss-Peace-Love-Absolute and is called by *Vedās* as *Brahman*. It is the Source and Culmination of this universe which is passing through unending cycles of 'Manifestation/Creation, Sustenance, and Retraction/Dissolution'. That unchanging Infinite Eternal Existence is the Impersonal God of the Hindus. All other forms, even the formless aspects as 'the Lord of the universe (*Īśvara*)', are but *manifestations* of that One Absolute Existence, the formless, attribute-less, limitless Existence, the Pure Consciousness (*Caitanya*) — the Spirit. This is the *Buddhi Yoga* Sri Krishna speaks of in B.G which opens up the divine eyes (*Divya Cakṣu* दिव्य चक्षु) by the Grace of the Divine.

This absolutely pure intellect (*Buddhi*) which, owing to its oneness with Nature gets established in equanimity (*Samatvam*). To possess this *Buddhi* and whatever is done with this divinized intellect Sri Krishna calls it *Buddhi-Yoga* (B.G. II.39-49).

****

CLASS – 3

Date: US: 08th Feb. 2024
Time: West Coast 6-30 pm.

* We are entering a subject intimately associated with our life as spiritual aspirants. Being spiritual seekers, we avoid scholarly and academic way of study and learn to imbibe the principles and facts to being them to practical level in our lives.

* There are only 2 important Scriptures — Bhagavad Gita, and Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna which teach us how to live in the world attending to all duties of life and also fulfill the main purpose of human life — to realize God.

* Life is inevitable, for we have a part to play. We have not come here out of our option; we have been brought here in this world by Mother Nature with a definite purpose. It is imposed upon us, and we are imprisoned here and in this bodily existence. We seek release. We need spiritual illumination which takes us beyond Nature. We need to go beyond worldly desires limiting ourself to bare needs of sustenance of life. The life must be joyful and with peace and harmony at every level. Spiritual growth ensures it. Spiritual growth is to grow like a child growing to youth wherein he finds no fascination for toys of his childhood days. So do we overgrow the worldly desires.

* Making Arjuna and the war as a mere occasion (*Nimitta*), Sri Krishna is presenting to the mankind the unchanging Eternal Principles that governs human life at all times in all places and under all circumstances. It contains all aspects and the whole essence of The Truth, the ultimate Reality, the Spiritual heritage of India.

  Every Hindu/Indian philosophy is but a detailed explanation of three entities — the individual Soul: *Jīva*, the universe: *Jagat*, and the Eternal Beyond: *Īśvara*/God. All these three entities are completely analyzed in its essence and practicality, reality and in its

absoluteness. What Sri Krishna wants to make us know that we are divine, we are immortal, we are ever free, and ever pure. Realize this Truth.

CLASS – 4

Date: US: 15th Feb. 2024
Time: West Coast 6-30 pm.

Bhagavad Gita, as we have seen earlier, contains Eternal Principles that govern all lives in this universe; and in particular, human life and its destiny. It also gives us to the level of our understanding, the knowledge of the laws that govern this material world. Further, it gives us the various aspects of the Divine that stands behind this world-play as the silent uninvolved *Substratum*; that stands pervading the entire universe as the al-pervading *Governing Authority*, the Lord of Universe; that stands as Power making the universe to function and move on according to certain definite laws as Mother Nature; and its unending manifestations (like *Avatāras*, Divine incarnations) which keep on rising anew like waves in an ocean. This unconditioned un-limited Consciousness (*Caitanya*) is what man from unknown past has been adoring as God, observing, and holding on to one of Its aspects of manifestation. Thus, all Saints and Illumined Souls hold on to this Holy Text and, present it to the world as Supreme Source of Scriptural Authority. The spiritual treasure that is enshrined in it impels the wise and Enlightened ones to place it in par with the *Vedās*. In B.G. the *Vedic* Truths shine forth like the gems in gold-ornaments. In this sense it is said to be '*Upaniṣad*'. Thus, we find each chapter of the Bhagavad Gita ending with its — 'supremacy proclaiming phrases that give us its divine identity:

Om Tatsaditi, Srimad-bhagavad-gītāsu, *upniṣadsu*, *Brahmavidyāyām*, *Yogaśāstre — Sri Kṛṣṇārjuna Samvāde* ….‖ Let us try to understand the import of those phrases.

(i) *Om Tatsaditi*:

Adding of *Om* behind any word or behind a person's name or any entity is meant to eliminate its material aspect and emphatically indicate its pure Spiritual aspect. Rāmā is Dasharatha's son, *Om Rāmā* is viewing him independent of his earthly existence. Then we find him being a manifestation (*Avatāra*) of the Lord of the Universe; *Om Rāmā* is 'God' on earth. A tree or a stone is purely a matter. If you say *Om-tree* or *Om-stone*, then they are deprived of their material aspects, and — the Spirit/*Caitanya* that stands behind them as their Substratum (The Impersonal aspect of God) and which stands pervading them as All-Pervading Spirit (the Personal aspect of God) — is indicated. This principle is adapted in using idols and images to represent 'God' in their worship. Any object of this universe that attracts you, that is capable of capturing your attention, on which you can focus your attention or love it heartily — be it a picture, an image, a person, an object, wind, river, or rising sun,— just by adding Om to it can be used as symbol, emblem of God for offering worship through which you can approach God. In fact, every object that you can think of can be worshipped as God, for everything has emerged from That One, and is going to merge back in Him. God is Consciousness itself and, is the indweller in all beings; He will surely receive the worship/love/adoration and reward accordingly. He may not remove the *Kārmic* load (*Sukha-Duḥkha*) of the devotee, but He destroys the *Vāsanās* (the tendencies that drive man to chase the world)

and makes way for the devotee's evolution to divine-hood which alone relieves man from all sufferings and bondages forever.

This *Om* is used at the beginning and end of every chapter to eliminate the world-background and present a divine-background so that we will be able to perceive the Truth, the Divine and, realize our own divinity and manifest divinity at all levels of our being. Lives after lives we have acquired a tendency to view everything in the background of this material world. And our view is colored by our likes and dislikes, attachments and aversions (*Rāga-Dveṣa*); and with our ego as the center. But, all *Hindu* Scriptures from *Vedic* times to our present times — from *Vedās* to Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, they intend infusing 'divine eyes' '*Divya Cakṣu*' in man by which he is able to see the Truth, the Divine everywhere at all times. So too is this *Bhagavad Gita* intending to awaken the '*Spirit*' within us so that we, the humans, are able to see everything in divine-background instead of worldly-background. It wants our viewing to be free from coloring by our likes and dislikes (*Rāga-Dveṣa*) and be seeing through the transparent glasses of *Jñāna* — wisdom; and, instead of ego being the center, it wants God to be the center by which we view. This is precisely, the transcendence of Nature, the state of *Jīvanmuktha*, the Enlightened Soul.

Om is symbol representing the imperceptible, inconceivable Absolute Existence, the *Nirguṇa Nirākāra*, The *Brahman*. The *Om* represents entire process of unendingly on-going repetitive cycles of the Creation-Sustenance-Retraction (*Sṛṣṭi-Sthiti-Laya*) of the universe. *Om* is the Source and Culmination of all *Mantrās* leading to realization of God. It is the Source and Culmination of all lives.

1 2 3 4 5

It is therefore symbolized by 'one whole ['**1**'] splitting into two halves ('**2**') and a wave emerging from their junction ['**3**'] sound symbol represented by Crescent-moon with a star above ['**4**'] indicating Nature (universe with all beings and laws governing them) coming into existence; the whole symbol would be "ॐ" ['**5**']. Thus, it represents the Supreme Knowledge by knowing which man transcends the entire Nature and becomes Immortal.

****

CLASS – 5

Date: US: 22nd Feb. 2024
Time: West Coast 6-30 pm.

Tadsaditi : तत्सदिति (तत् + सत् + इति):

— The term '*Tat–Sat*' literally means 'That Truth'. 'That' term indicates the imperceptible Beyond, the Realm Transcendental. The term 'Truth' indicates the unhanging Eternal Infinite Ocean of Bliss in which the ever-changing universe appears, remains for some time and merges back in to emerge again and again.

In Scriptural texts (herein, the *Bhagavad Gita*) *Tat-sat* refers to that The Absolute Existence, The '*Sat-Cit-Ānanda*' (*Saccidānanda*) 'Existence-Knowledge/Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute'. *Vedās* call this ultimate Reality as *Brahman*. Knowledge of this *Brahman* got through realization releases man from all bonds and sufferings forever. This knowledge is said to be the Supreme Knowledge.

The word '*Iti*' means 'so flows on. When '*Iti*' added to *Tat-Sat* it refers to the Supreme Knowledge innate in *Brahman* that keeps on flowing incessantly in various ways through various channels. In our present context, it is being seen flowing through B.G. Thus, *Iti* here means that '*it is, it was, and it shall keep on continuing*' to flow from generation to generation unendingly. By this, the soul who studies B.G. feels the blessedness of having participated in that eternally going on flow of the Supreme Divine Knowledge.

In Scriptures and writings '*iti* इति' is a finishing word — '*Samāpti pada*'. '*Atha* अथ' is used at the beginning which means 'Hence forth'. Though it is the beginning of a subject afresh, it gives a sense as if we are continuing the previous episode. It is to point out that spiritual knowledge has neither an end nor a beginning. And '*iti*' is use at the end to mean — 'so goes on' the knowledge.

The other purpose it serves is elimination of errors committed. The thought of the Real is found to be eliminating the guilt feeling of errors that happen during chanting or reading or while studying. A person might have wrongly pronounced, wrongly understood, or might have wrongly interpreted — these shortcomings of omission and commissions are said to be nullified by remembering the Divine/God/*Brahman* where all differences dissolve.

The ॐ तत्सदिति finally stands as prayer that — "The flow of knowledge which emerges with the Creation of the universe, and that which sanctifies human race generations after generations, keep on flowing eternally".

There is a common expression '*Hariḥ Om Tatsat*' ('हरिः ॐ तत् सत्'). The word '*Hariḥ*' is from *Sanskrit* root '*hṛ* ह्र' — 'to carry away'. Look at the expression: 'wind carried away the papers'; 'he carried away all my worries', 'he carried away my heart'; 'his return carried away my grief', 'God carried away my sins'. Everything in this world is on move and is being carried away. The Lord of the universe, who makes *all things move on*, *to carry on*, is address as '*Hari*'. It includes unendingly ongoing cycles of projection, sustenance, and retraction (*Sṛṣṭi*, *Sthiti*, *Pralaya*) of this universe. So does He carry away the pains, sufferings, misfortunes, bondages, and death too of His devotee. God is Unmoved Prime-mover and therefore He has been called '*Hari*'. And, it is He that appears as Incarnation/*Avatāra* of the Lord/God.

Thus, '*Hariḥ Om Tat Sat*' means that the entire 'Manifestation of that Absolute is verily that Absolute Existence'. It is a statement that asserts that 'the Universe in which we live, and we all who live in it, are verily that Absolute Existence; eternal and immortal'. It amounts to saying see everything as Divine, i.e., see not this world of dualities (good and bad, joy and sorrow) with materialistic eyes (of likes and dislikes) but see it with inner spiritual eyes. You will be filled with love, peace, bliss, and compassion at all times. By that you will be blessed and happy, and you make others blessed and happy.

Thus we find in B.G. at the end of each chapter 'So flows down the Supreme Knowledge' — '*Om tatsaditi*'. This unending and unceasing flow of knowledge from the Absolute which begins with Creation and flows on till retraction of the universe (in every cycle) is depicted in *Purāṇās* as *Śiva* telling to *Pārvati*: it is, in fact, knowledge flowing from the Un-manifest (*Śiva*) into the manifested universe and reaching the human Consciousness (*Pārvati*).

****